ELL Reader

Social Studies

Genre	Build Background	Access Content	Extend Language
Nonfiction	• The Renaissance • Countries of Europe • Fine Art	• Captions • Labels • Definitions • Historical Pictures	• Prefix *re-* • Action Verbs and Direct Objects

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Social Studies

The Renaissance



by Claire Barberini







The Renaissance

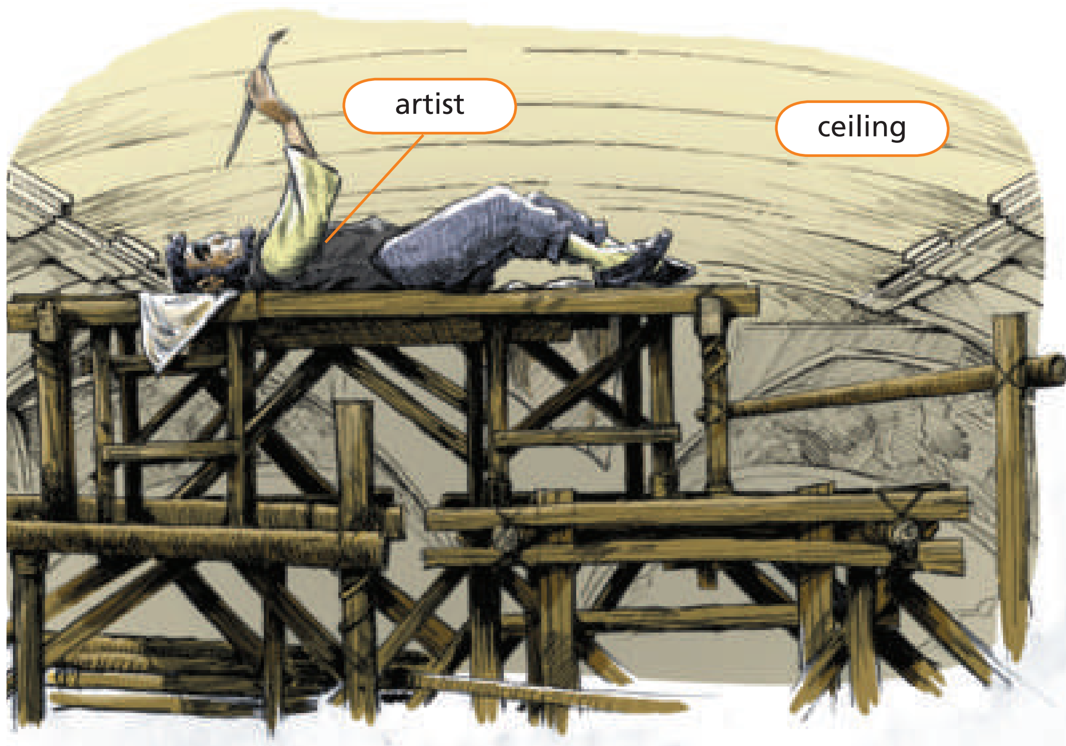


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During the Renaissance, artists painted on the walls of buildings. Michelangelo created a beautiful painting on the ceiling of an Italian church. It took him four years!


Long ago, all over Europe, there was a time of great wonder. People had new ideas. They invented new things. They created great works of art. They fashioned, or designed, beautiful buildings. It was the Renaissance.

The Renaissance began in Italy in the 14th century. That means the 1300s. Later, it moved to the rest of Europe. It lasted into the middle of the 17th century. That means until about 1650.

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invented: were the first to make

century: period of 100 years




Renaissance is a French word. It means "rebirth"—a time when things are born or discovered again. In the Renaissance, people found books that had been lost for hundreds and hundreds of years. They rediscovered lost art too.

Much of this art and learning was from the old civilizations of Greece and Rome. The ancient civilization of Rome had its center in Italy. After the powers of the old Roman civilization had ended, much of Europe went through centuries without the old knowledge. Then the ancient ideas were learned again.

Extend Language Prefixes

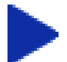
Prefixes are added to the beginning of words. They change word meanings. Think about the words and their definitions below. What does the prefix *re-* mean?

- *redo* means "do again"
- *rewrite* means "write again"
- *rediscover* means "discover again"

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civilizations: cultures; the ways of life of groups of people

ancient: many hundreds of years old; early





After its beginning in Italy, the Renaissance spread to other countries. All over Europe, people were interested in learning and discovering new things. They achieved great things.





In Poland, an astronomer named Copernicus discovered new things about the sun and the planets.





In Spain, the king and queen sent Christopher Columbus to find land across the ocean. He found the Americas.

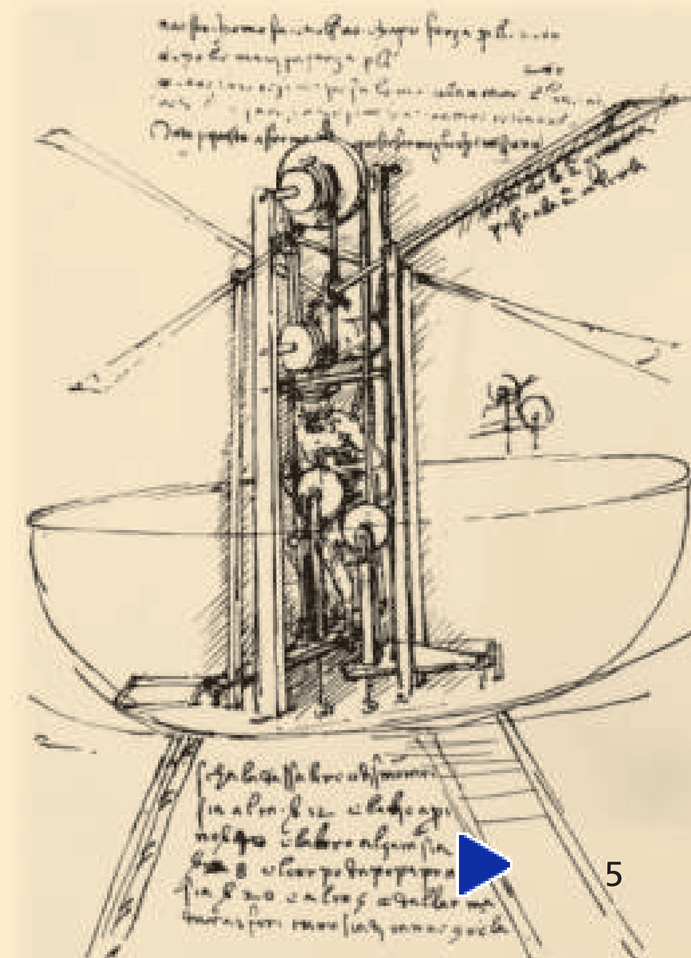


In France, a philosopher, or thinker, named Descartes wrote about right and wrong.





In Italy, Leonardo da Vinci planned new inventions. No one had ever planned a flying machine. Leonardo made drawings to show how his inventions would work. His flying machine was not built, but his ideas are famous.



astronomer: person who studies the stars, planets, and space



In the Renaissance, people used ideas from the past to create new art. They let the old ideas inspire them. They created art for everyone to enjoy.



In England, a writer named Shakespeare wrote and performed plays for everyone to see.



In Italy, an artist named Rafael painted beautiful pictures for churches and other centers of religion.

Extend Language **Action Verb and Direct Object**

An action verb tells of doing something. A direct object tells what receives the action.

For example, *I eat an apple*. *Eat* is the action verb. *Apple* is the direct object of *eat*.

Here are some examples from this book.

The action (verb)		what (direct object)
• created	⟶	art
• planned	⟶	inventions
• performed	⟶	plays
• found	⟶	the Americas

Can you find other examples?

inspire: give ideas to







Perhaps Shakespeare inspired some of the plays we see today.

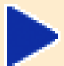




Perhaps Michelangelo inspired the City of San Francisco to let painters decorate the walls of buildings with paintings.



The ideas and art of the Renaissance inspired works of art all over the world.





Even today, we are inspired by the art, ideas, and discoveries of the Renaissance. People are still deep thinkers. People are still artists. People write beautiful words. They have great dreams. They invent new ways to do things.

Your whole life is ahead of you. What might the Renaissance inspire you to do?



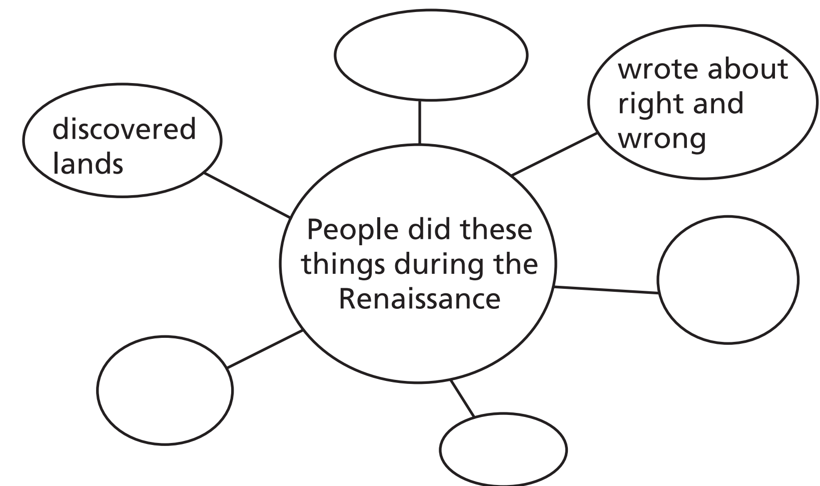


Talk About It

1. What was the Renaissance?
2. How does the Renaissance inspire people today?

Write About It

3. What did people do during the Renaissance? Draw a word web on a separate sheet of paper.



Extend Language

An artist can draw a picture. What does it mean to *redraw* the same image?

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